

Catskill Mountain House.
July 17th. 1847.

Dear Fanny & Marian

I must at least begin a letter from this glorious spot, although I have to descend from it in an hour for Albany. After two days of long, perplexing & laborious talk in N. York, (which resulted quite well on the whole), we took the north river boat on Thursday morning & as if by magic transportation were in a few minutes floating through the lovely scenery of the Hudson - Channing, & Mr Henry James, a singularly interesting man, made high talk for us on the boat. We left them & landed at Catskill village at two o'clock, & four hours ride took us up to the Mountain House which is quite an elegant little palace, neat, airy, spacious on the very verge of the precipice, 3000 feet above the ocean ~~12~~ miles from the river & overlooking an immense space. It is not quite upon the summit, but almost & backed by mountains peering above each others' brazen shoulders, & a haze so filled the valley that we could scarcely see beyond the river, yet the prospect was immense, & as the sun went down, the great dark outlines of the mountains stretched away ~~like~~ as if a Michel Angelo had dreamed them. We felt ~~the~~ rather than saw their grand presence - And such an atmosphere - so pure, & cool & stimulating, like the perfection of October weather; although all below was summering

& bucky with the noisy herds of wild geese.
It was a change sensation to see so much
spread out below your feet, fields, villages,
pastured horses & yet hear not a sound from
all that life, - the distance was so great - But
why say was? I have it all before me
now. We stopped on peak and strathairns, & other
ed about the very mountain-tops, where they
& other herds keep out at every turn & corner
of the rocks, with a most friendly welcome -

After a round sunset sleep, we rose with
the sun & took a three miles ramble through
the wildest woods past, eating 'maple' leaves
of pine mountain herbs, even & even raised the
leafy floor until we came to the grand
central sanctuary & altar of ~~the~~ ~~atop of the~~
whole the Cathole Falls!

Monday, July 19th. 6. a.m. Lebanon Springs. Shall I go
back & describe the Cathole Falls? I can not do it, but
must wait till I can talk with you about them. You
I have seen nothing so sublime since Niagara. Had of
Cathole, altogether I must say, I never saw a place
in which I should so like to spend an entire summer.
No pine, no rock, no swimming to high thoughts
& sentiment so plainly the brain's activity, as
see you say its opposite, less & disagreeable. So early
is it, there are ~~with~~ feels like with, or like any
other work there almost any hour in the hottest day

of bushes - To see & breathe, & hunt out new
paths amid the trees & rocks is another occa-
sion. For two days I was as my feet could
walk, & did such labor in the perpendicular way, as always
brought me back to the house with a bad head &
appetite, & the most elegant luxury to protect it.
The mountains are wadded to their summits - The
certain for the most part does not differ from what
you see in Northampton. Chestnut trees abound & in
full bloom - The wild flowers, ferns, shrubs &c, hardly
vary from our own. The most precious flowers at this
time is the wild poppy, plant - but an exquisite
creatio white flower, striped with pink & yellow centers
equal to Rheinhard's best & literally carpet the ground.
I wish I could have sent you an Indian wild flower
of a new species to me white, very pale & fragrant
with broad oval petals & leaves shining like to
the ground. And the deer little have - Well perhaps
the precise before our house, swinging just over
the edge where any one might reach it but
where it is fearful to step in order to do so.
We came down from the second highest Saturday
morning & were back in the primitive plain on the
lowly blanket & in half an hour - There we
made no stop, but took the cars at once for
Lebanon Spring where we have spent the Sunday.
This too is a delightful retreat although full of
palatable - flowers & herbs - an old house full of
ground hares & rabbits, surrounded with trees &
woods, with an air of comfort & antiquity, without

the glaring regularity of new establishment but
looking as if it had gradually moulded itself
to the wants of the human sphere the former
from summer to summer. It was a dreadfully hot
day, but it did prevent us from walking two
miles & a half to the membership of the Shakers;
& we made the journey again in the cool of
evening & had some deeply interesting talk
with the elders.

This morning up by train, to enjoy a
glorious plunge bath, from the Spring, &
finish this letter. In an hour we are off
again for the rail-road which will take
us to Springfield, thence to Brattleboro',
passing through Northampton without stop. We
hope to sleep in Brattleboro' to-night.

Tell the Arden ^{Mr. Kelsey} I will write him an
editorial letter as soon as I come to
another stop. Love to all.

Yours affectionate brother,
J. S. D.

P.S. Should there be occasion to write to me, send
to Keene as that will be the last pause. Ex-
pect me home by the end of the week. Tell Fanny Mc-
Daniel, I wished to write to her from Catskill, but could not squeeze out
the time.